



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/826,684	04/16/2004	Hugues F. Malandain	17116-004001	9582

26181 7590 01/19/2007  
FISH & RICHARDSON P.C.  
PO BOX 1022  
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55440-1022

EXAMINER
----------

ARAJ, MICHAEL J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3733

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	01/19/2007	PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 10/826,684	<b>Applicant(s)</b> MALANDAIN, HUGUES F.	
	<b>Examiner</b> Michael J. Araj	<b>Art Unit</b> 3733	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-43 is/are pending in the application.  
4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8, 10-26, 28, 31 and 38-43 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 9, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 36 and 37 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 14 September 2004 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application                      |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>5/9/05, 9/2/05</u> | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____  |

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Drawings*

New corrected drawings in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in this application because the figures should only have numeric labels and the number labels and lines coming from them are not uniform (handwritten). Applicant is advised to employ the services of a competent patent draftsman outside the Office, as the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office no longer prepares new drawings. The corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The requirement for corrected drawings will not be held in abeyance.

### *Double Patenting*

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 1,3-6,10-12,14,15,28,31,34,35,37-39 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 4-9,11,12,14-16 and 18 of copending Application No. 11/019,918. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because they are claiming the same invention.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

Claims 8,9,26 and 27 provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 1 of copending Application No. 11/019,918. Everything is disclosed except for the anchor assembly and support element being made of a specific commonly known material. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to the device with these materials, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. In re Leshin, 125 USPQ 416.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection.

A rejection based on double patenting of the "same invention" type finds its support in the language of 35 U.S.C. 101 which states that "whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process ... may obtain a patent therefor ..." (Emphasis added). Thus, the term "same invention," in this context, means an invention drawn to identical subject matter. See *Miller v. Eagle Mfg. Co.*, 151 U.S. 186 (1894); *In re Ockert*, 245 F.2d 467, 114 USPQ 330 (CCPA 1957); and *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970).

A statutory type (35 U.S.C. 101) double patenting rejection can be overcome by canceling or amending the conflicting claims so they are no longer coextensive in

Art Unit: 3733

scope. The filing of a terminal disclaimer cannot overcome a double patenting rejection based upon 35 U.S.C. 101.

Claim 43 is provisionally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 as claiming the same invention as that of claim 20 of copending Application No. 11/019,918. This is a provisional double patenting rejection since the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

### ***Claim Objections***

Claim 2, 19, 20, 29 and 37 are objected to because of the following informalities:

In Claim 2, line 2, "f fibula" should read 'fibula'.

In Claim 19, 20, 29, 32 and 37 the claimed invention is does not appear to be in the figures. (The first end and second ends of the receiver being open, being closed and a cam disposed within the locker aperture, respectively)

Appropriate correction is required.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-8, 10-17, 21-23, 26, 31, 35 and 36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Vignaud et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,290,288).

Vignaud et al. disclose a biocompatible elongate plate support element with a top portion and a bottom portion having a bottom surface and on or more apertures passing therethrough that spans two or more vertebrae. The bottom surface includes a receiver

Art Unit: 3733

configured to receive a plurality of anchor assemblies wherein the anchor assemblies includes a means for locking the anchor assembly to the support element. The means for locking includes a locking aperture. Also disclosed is a base (screw) having a head and a means for locking the base to the anchor assembly, such that when assembled, the head of the base for the anchor assembly does not pass through the support element. (See Figure 1 below) The base is comprised of a base head wherein the base head is movably disposed within the anchor assembly. One or more apertures have dimensional configuration providing access to the base and the means for locking the base to the anchor assembly through the top portion of the support element, wherein the head of the base for the anchor assembly does not pass through the support element. The receiver is integrally disposed and attached within the bottom surface of the bottom portion of the support element having a configuration of a slot. The receiver or access ports spans the length of the bottom surface and is comprised of two open ends. The means for locking the anchor assembly to the support element includes a screw (3) disposed within the locker aperture, wherein the screw and locker aperture are threaded.

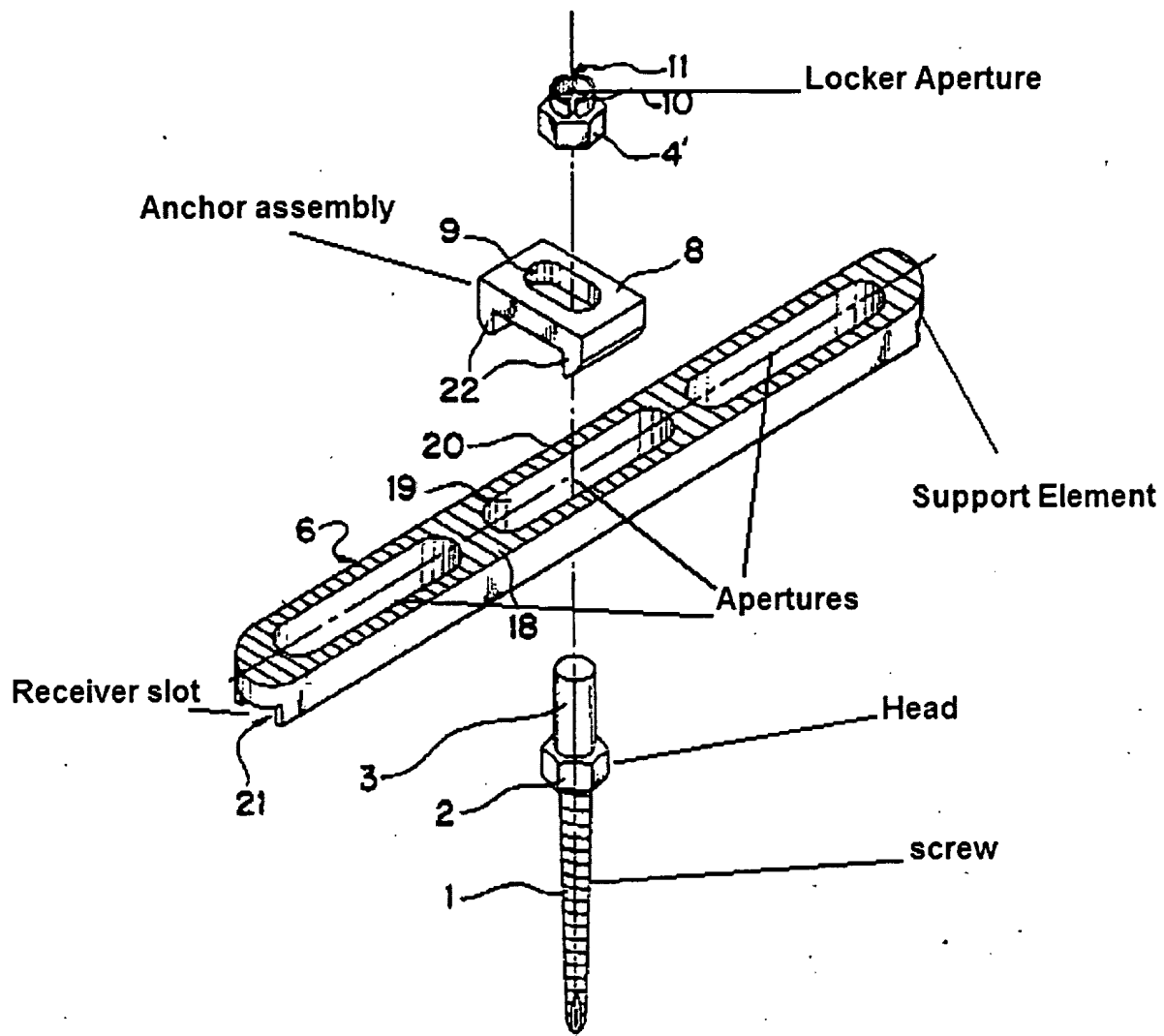


Figure 1

Claims 38-42 and 44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Keller (U.S. Patent No. 5,234,431).

Keller discloses a method of implanting a plurality of anchor assemblies (4) having bases into the bone (see Figure 2), connectively positioning a support element (3) having a receiver (16), locking the bases within the anchor assemblies and locking

the anchor assemblies within the support element receiver with the two locking means (7 and 11).

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 9 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vignaud et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,290,288).

Vignaud et al. disclose the claimed invention except for the support element and the anchor assembly being made of titanium. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made these pieces with titanium since it is an obvious type of biocompatible material as already stated in the document, and since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. In re Leshin, 125 USPQ 416.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

Claims 30, 33, 36 and 37 objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.



**Conclusion**


The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. See PTO-892 for art cited of interest.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael J. Araj whose telephone number is 571-272-5963. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8am-5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eduardo Robert can be reached on 571-272-4719. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

  
MJA

  
EDUARDO C. ROBERT  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER